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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 RIYADH 004701

DEPARTMENT FOR S/CT FOR REAP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PTER SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIA: 1997 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF: STATE 223177

11. THE FOLLOWING RESTATES AND RESPONDS TO EACH OF THE QUESTIONS SET FORTH IN REFTEL.

1A. DESCRIBE THE RESPONSE OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF EACH COUNTRY TO ACTS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND/OR SIGNIFICANT ACTS OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM DURING 1997, INCLUDING ANY HOST GOVERNMENT PROSECUTION RELATING TO TERRORISM. PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO HOST GOVERNMENT ACTIONS REGARDING ACTS OF TERRORISM AGAINST OR AFFECTING U.S. CITIZENS OR FACILITIES.

RESPONSE: THE SAG IS CONTINUING ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE KHOBAR TOWERS BOMB ATTACK OF JUNE 1996 WHICH KILLED 19 U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL. ALTHOUGH THE SAG HAS REPORTEDLY DETAINED AND ARRESTED SAUDI CITIZENS IN CONNECTION WITH THE BOMBING, IT HAS NOT YET BEGUN PROSECUTION OR TAKEN ANY OTHER PUBLIC LEGAL ACTION REGARDING ANY SUCH PERSONS. THERE WERE NO OTHER KNOWN TERRORIST CASES OR ACTIONS THAT CAME BEFORE THE JUDICIARY IN 1997.

1B. DID THE HOST GOVERNMENT EXTRADITE OR REQUEST THE EXTRADITION OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS FOR PROSECUTION DURING THE YEAR? PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO HOST GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO U.S. REQUESTS FOR EXTRADITION OR ASSISTANCE IN TERRORIST CASES.

RESPONSE: THE SAG REQUESTED THAT CANADA DEPORT SAUDI CITIZEN HANI AL-SAYEGH TO SAUDI ARABIA. CANADIAN OFFICIALS DETAINED AL-SAYEGH ON CHARGES OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE JUNE 1996 KHOBAR TOWERS BOMB ATTACK. HOWEVER, CANADA DEPORTED AL-SAYEGH TO THE UNITED STATES. THE SAG HAS NOW REQUESTED THAT THE USG DEPORT AL-SAYEGH TO SAUDI ARABIA. THE SAG SEEKS TO QUESTION AND PERHAPS PROSECUTE AL-SAYEGH FOR HIS ALLEGED ROLE IN THE KILLING OF 19 UNITED STATES MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBING. THE SAG HAS ALSO REPORTEDLY REQUESTED THAT THE TALIBAN GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN PROHIBIT SAUDI BORN TERRORIST FINANCIER AND SUPPORTER USAMA BIN LADEN FROM INSTIGATING OR ENCOURAGING ACTS OF TERRORISM AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA OR ITS WESTERN ALLIES. BIN LADEN, WHO WAS STRIPPED OF HIS SAUDI CITIZENSHIP IN 1994, ENCOURAGES AND IS BELIEVED TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS IN ACTS OF TERRORISM AGAINST THE SAUDI ROYAL FAMILY AND COUNTRIES SUPPORTIVE OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES. THE SAG IS REPORTED TO HAVE UNSUCCESSFULLY REQUESTED THAT SYRIA EXTRADITE OR DEPORT A SUSPECT IN THE KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBING TO SAUDI ARABIA FOR QUESTIONING AND POSSIBLE PROSECUTION. THE SUSPECT IN QUESTION WAS REPORTED TO HAVE DIED WHILE IN POLICE CUSTODY IN SYRIA.

1C. DESCRIBE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPEDIMENTS TO HOST GOVERNMENT PROSECUTION AND/OR EXTRADITION OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS.

RESPONSE: NO LEGAL OR POLITICAL IMPEDIMENTS EXIST TO THE SAG'S PROSECUTION OF PERSONS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED TERRORIST ACTS WITHIN SAUDI ARABIA. HOWEVER, THE SAG HAS NOT ENTERED INTO EXTRADITION TREATIES WITH MOST OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES. (NOTE: EXTRADITION TREATIES EXIST WITH YEMEN AND EGYPT.)

1D. DISCUSS HOST GOVERNMENT RESPONSES OTHER THAN PROSECUTION. THIS WOULD INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCIES FOLLOWING A TERRORIST INCIDENT (IN OR OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY) AND EFFORTS BY HOST GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATE TERRORIST INCIDENTS OR TO ASSIST WITH INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS.

RESPONSE: THE SAG AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING THE KING, CROWN PRINCE, MINISTER OF INTERIOR, OFFICIAL ISLAMIC CLERGY, AND OFFICIAL NEWS

MEDIA, PUBLICLY AND CONSISTENTLY CONDEMNS TERRORISM IN UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS. THE SAG STRONGLY CONDEMNED THE NOVEMBER 1997 LUXOR MASSACRE IN EGYPT. THE SAG CONTINUES TO INVESTIGATE THE KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBING AND HAS ASSISTED THE USG IN ITS OWN INVESTIGATION OF THE BOMBING. HOWEVER, PRESS REPORTS ASSERTED THAT THE USG EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION AT THE LACK OF ACCESS TO EVIDENCE AND SUSPECTS. ACCORDING TO HIGH LEVEL SAG OFFICIALS, THE SAUDI JUDICIAL SYSTEM (SHARIA) DOES NOT ALLOW FOREIGNERS DIRECT FACE TO FACE ACCESS TO SUSPECTS.

I.E. DESCRIBE MAJOR COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN IN 1997 BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING STEPS TAKEN IN INTERNATIONAL FORA.

RESPONSE: THE SAG CONTINUES TO INVESTIGATE THE KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBING. IT HAS ALSO UNDERTAKEN NUMEROUS MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY PROTECTION OF U.S. MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL. THESE STEPS INCLUDE ASSISTING IN THE RELOCATION OF U.S. DEPLOYED PERSONNEL AND MANY TRAINING MISSION PERSONNEL TO PRINCE SULTAN AIRBASE AND ESKAN VILLAGE, LOCATIONS REMOVED FROM POPULATION CENTERS, AND INCREASING SECURITY MEASURES AT OFFICIAL U.S. PREMISES. AT A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ARAB LEAGUE INTERIOR MINISTERS IN TUNIS, THE SAG ENDORSED A NON-BINDING ARAB LEAGUE ACTION PLAN TO COMBAT TERRORISM. AT A DOHA MEETING OF THE GCC INTERIOR MINISTERS, THE SAG AGREED TO INCREASE SECURITY COOPERATION AND COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS AMONG THE MEMBER STATES. AT A MEETING OF ARAB JUSTICE MINISTERS IN CAIRO, THE SAG JOINED THE OTHER MEMBER STATES IN CALLING FOR THE ADOPTION OF A PLAN TO ALLOW FOR THE EXTRADITION AMONG ARAB STATES OF MILITANTS SOUGHT IN CONNECTION WITH TERRORIST ATTACKS. THE SAG ALSO ENTERED INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING TERRORISM.

I.F. DESCRIBE ANY SIGNIFICANT HOST GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, TERRORIST, OR TERRORIST GROUPS, INCLUDING (BUT NOT LIMITED TO) POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF TERRORISTS OR THEIR ACTIVITIES; DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT THROUGH DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION; MISUSE OF THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH AND OTHER DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES TO SUPPORT TERRORISM; PROVISION SANCTUARY AND/OR PRESENCE OF OFFICES OF TERRORIST GROUPS; PROVISION OF TRAINING OR TRAINING SITES; PROVISION OF WEAPONS; AND POSITIONS TAKEN ON TERRORISM ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA.

RESPONSE: THE SAG DOES NOT FINANCIALLY SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS OR ACTIVITIES. ITS REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PRIVATE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES OBTAIN GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL CAUSES. NONETHELESS, THERE CONTINUE TO BE ALLEGATIONS THAT INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES SOLICIT AND COLLECT PRIVATE FUNDS IN SAUDI ARABIA.

I.G. HAS THE HOST GOVERNMENT MADE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF A TERRORIST-SUPPORTING COUNTRY ON A TERRORISM ISSUE? (THE SEVEN COUNTRIES ON THE USG'S SO-CALLED "TERRORISM LIST" OF STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM ARE CUBA, IRAN, IRAQ, LIBYA, NORTH KOREA, SYRIA, AND SUDAN.)

RESPONSE: THE SAG DID NOT MAKE OFFICIAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS SPECIFICALLY SUPPORTING ANY OF THE SEVEN COUNTRIES ON THE USG'S TERRORISM LIST REGARDING A TERRORIST ISSUE. HOWEVER, THE SAG JOINED IN THE NON-BINDING ARAB LEAGUE RESOLUTION TO LIFT UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL SANCTIONS AGAINST LIBYA DESPITE LIBYA'S FAILURE TO COOPERATE WITH THE UNITED NATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE BOMBING OF A PAN AM PASSENGER JET OVER LOCKERBIE, SCOTLAND. THE SAG ALLOWED LIBYAN AND IRAQI AIRCRAFT CARRYING HAJJ PILGRIMS TO LAND AT JEDDAH'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND DEPART IN VIOLATION OF UNSC SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON LIBYA AND IRAQ. THE SAG HAS REPEATEDLY COMMENTED PUBLICLY THAT ALL PILGRIMS WITH VALID HAJJ VISAS SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY SAUDI ARABIA, REGARDLESS OF THEIR MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION.

I.H. DESCRIBE ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE SINCE 1996, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, IN THE HOST GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD TERRORISM, INTERNATIONAL OR DOMESTIC. WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS CHANGE?

RESPONSE: TERRORIST ATTACKS IN 1995 AND 1996 GREATLY HEIGHTENED SAG CONCERNs ABOUT THE THREAT OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM. THE ATTACKS MET WITH WIDESPREAD OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC CONDEMNATION, AND HAVE SPURRED GREATER COOPERATION AMONG SAUDI SECURITY ORGANS IN ADDRESSING INTERNAL SECURITY ISSUES. THE SAG HAS ALSO

SUBSTANTIALLY INTENSIFIED ITS DIALOGUE WITH GCC AND OTHER REGIONAL NEIGHBORS ON COMBATING TERRORISM. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, THE SAG CONTINUES TO BE CONCERNED WITH SAUDIS AND OTHERS WHO RECEIVED TRAINING IN AFGHANISTAN IN THE USE OF EXPLOSIVES AND OTHER WEAPONS. THREE OF THE FOUR TERRORISTS EXECUTED FOR PERPETRATING THE NOVEMBER 1995 BOMB ATTACK IN RIYADH RECEIVED SUCH TRAINING DURING THE AFGHAN WAR. THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT REMAINS VERY CONCERNED WITH A CONTINUED TERRORIST PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN, ESPECIALLY TERRORISTS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF USAMA BIN LADIN, A TERRORIST FINANCIER AND SUPPORTER OF SAUDI ORIGIN. THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT BIN LADIN PROMOTES TERRORISM IN SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

I.I. DESCRIBE U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS AND INITIATIVES WITH RESPECT TO THE HOST GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, SPECIFIC U.S. REQUESTS TO THE HOST GOVERNMENT FOR COOPERATION AND EFFORTS BY THE UNITED STATES IN THE HOST COUNTRY TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED TO TERRORIST GROUPS DIRECTLY OR IN SUPPORT OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. DESCRIBE THE EXTENT OF THE HOST COUNTRY'S COOPERATION WITH THOSE EFFORTS AND INITIATIVES, INCLUDING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE HOST GOVERNMENT HAS SATISFIED THE SPECIFIC REQUESTS.

RESPONSE: BEGINNING WITH THE 1996 VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA OF A USG INTERAGENCY COUNTERTERRORISM TEAM FOLLOWING THE 1995 OPM/SANG BOMBING, THE USG AND THE SAG ENTERED INTO UNPRECEDENTED HIGH-LEVEL, COORDINATED, INTERAGENCY CONSULTATIONS ON COUNTERTERRORISM AND SECURITY ISSUES WHICH ENGENDERED HIGH-LEVEL SAG INTEREST AND THE PARTICIPATION OF MULTIPLE SAG MINISTRIES. THIS INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION HAS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT 1997. THE USG AND SAG EXCHANGED INFORMATION ON COUNTERTERRORISM AND SECURITY ISSUES AFFECTING AMERICAN AND SAUDI INTERESTS IN THE REGION. CONSULTATIONS AND TRAINING FOR SAUDI COUNTERTERRORISM AND SECURITY OFFICIALS IN THE UNITED STATES ALSO OCCURRED. FOLLOWING THE 1996 KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBING, THE USG AND THE SAG FURTHER INCREASED COOPERATION. FBI DIRECTOR LOUIS FREEH VISITED SAUDI ARABIA IN 1997 TO COORDINATE INVESTIGATIVE EFFORTS WITH SAUDI INTERIOR MINISTER PRINCE NAIF. THE FBI MAINTAINS A PERMANENTLY STAFFED LEGAL ATTACHE OFFICE IN THE U.S. EMBASSY. WHILE COOPERATION IN 1997 ON THE KHOBAR TOWERS INVESTIGATION WAS STRONG, IT HAS NOT ALWAYS MET THE EXPECTATIONS OF USG OFFICIALS. PRESS REPORTS ASSERTED THAT THE USG EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION AT THE LACK OF ACCESS TO EVIDENCE AND SUSPECTS. ACCORDING TO HIGH LEVEL SAG OFFICIALS, THE SAUDI JUDICIAL SYSTEM (SHARIA) DOES NOT ALLOW FOREIGNERS DIRECT FACE TO FACE ACCESS TO SUSPECTS. THERE HAS BEEN NO SPECIFIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE USG AND THE SAG REGARDING THE ELIMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED TO TERRORIST GROUPS. HOWEVER, THE SAG'S REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PRIVATE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES OBTAIN GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL CAUSES.

I.I. IN ADDITION TO THIS GENERAL INFORMATION, IF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS SOUGHT COOPERATION FROM THE HOST GOVERNMENT DURING THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS IN THE INVESTIGATION OR PROSECUTION OF AN ACT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AGAINST UNITED STATES CITIZENS OR INTERESTS, PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON:

(I) THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE HOST GOVERNMENT COOPERATED OR IS COOPERATING WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN APPREHENDING, CONVICTING, AND PUNISHING THE INDIVIDUAL OR INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACT; AND

(II) IF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS SOUGHT COOPERATION DURING THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS IN PREVENTION OF AN ACT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AGAINST U.S. CITIZENS OR INTERESTS, PLEASE DESCRIBE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE HOST GOVERNMENT COOPERATED OR IS COOPERATING IN PREVENTING ACTS OF TERRORISM AGAINST UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN THE HOST GOVERNMENT'S TERRITORY.

RESPONSE: (I) THE SAG HAS SOUGHT TO APPREHEND, CONVICT, AND PUNISH THE INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR BOTH THE OPM/SANG AND KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBINGS AGAINST UNITED STATES CITIZENS. IN DOING SO, THE SAG HAS COOPERATED WITH THE USG AT UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS. HOWEVER, THE SAG'S COOPERATION HAS BEEN UNEVEN AND HAS NOT ALWAYS MET THE EXPECTATIONS OF USG OFFICIALS. WHILE SAUDI OFFICIALS AND THE FBI HAVE WORKED CLOSELY ON MANY INVESTIGATION ISSUES RELATED TO BOTH BOMBINGS, PRESS REPORTS ASSERTED THAT THE USG EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION AT THE LACK OF ACCESS TO EVIDENCE AND SUSPECTS. ACCORDING TO HIGH

LEVEL SAG OFFICIALS, THE SAUDI JUDICIAL SYSTEM (SHARIA) DOES NOT ALLOW FOREIGNERS DIRECT FACE TO FACE ACCESS TO SUSPECTS. NONETHELESS, THE USG AND THE SAG CONTINUE TO CONSULT CLOSELY ON THE STATUS OF THE KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBING INVESTIGATION.

(II) THE SAG HAS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO PROTECT USG PERSONNEL AND INTERESTS FOLLOWING THE OPM/SANG AND KHOBAR TOWERS BOMBINGS. IT MADE AVAILABLE TO COALITION FORCES THE PRINCE SULTAN AIRBASE AT AL KHARJ, WHERE MOST U.S. SERVICEMEN IN SAUDI ARABIA ARE NOW LOCATED, AND A VERY LARGE RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND, KNOWN AS ESKAN VILLAGE, SOUTH OF RIYADH FOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN DOD PERSONNEL. THE SAG SPENT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FACILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS. THE SAG ALSO WORKED WITH AMERICAN SECURITY PERSONNEL TO ENHANCE PROTECTIVE MEASURES AT ALL OTHER USG FACILITIES IN SAUDI ARABIA, INCLUDING THE U.S. EMBASSY IN RIYADH AND THE CONSULATES GENERAL IN JEDDAH AND DHAHRAN. USG AND SAG OFFICIALS FROM THE HIGHEST LEVELS DOWN CONTINUE TO MEET REGULARLY TO REVIEW THE SAFETY OF AMERICANS IN SAUDI ARABIA.

1K. IF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS SOUGHT COOPERATION DURING THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS IN THE PREVENTION OF AN ACT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AGAINST U.S. CITIZENS OR INTERESTS, PLEASE DESCRIBE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE HOST GOVERNMENT COOPERATED OR IS COOPERATING IN PREVENTING ACTS OF TERRORISM AGAINST UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN THE HOST GOVERNMENT'S TERRITORY.

RESPONSE: THE SAG HAS GENERALLY PROVIDED TO THE USG INFORMATION ON THREATS DIRECTED AT U.S. INTERESTS IN SAUDI ARABIA AND CONTINUES TO LIAISE CLOSELY WITH USG AGENCIES TO PREVENT TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST AMERICANS IN THE KINGDOM. THREATS HAVE REGULARLY LED TO THE RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF EXTRA SECURITY PERSONNEL AND THE PLACEMENT OF PERMANENT PHYSICAL BARRIERS, CHECKPOINTS, AND OTHER VISIBLE DETERRENTS.

FOWLER